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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [KJUS](#) [SNAR](#) [PINR](#) [HO](#)  
SUBJECT: HONDURAN PRESIDENT ZELAYA'S INAUGURATION GOES WELL  
DESPITE DISORGANIZATION; USG DELEGATION WARMLY RECEIVED

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 151

11. (SBU) Summary: On Thursday, January 26, 2006 a U.S. Presidential Delegation, led by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales, arrived in Tegucigalpa to attend the inauguration of Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya Rosales. While the weeks and days leading to the events were plagued with confusion and indecision by both the outgoing and incoming Honduran administrations, the events on the day of the inauguration, almost surprisingly, took place without major incident. End summary.

Inaugural Events - Maduro Administration Says Goodbye  
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12. (SBU) The U.S. Presidential Delegation attending the inaugural events for Honduran President Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya Rosales was led by the Honorable Alberto R. Gonzales, Attorney General. Members of the delegation included: the Ambassador; Ambassador Cresencio Arcos, Assistant Secretary, International Affairs, Department of Homeland Security; Mr. Miguel A. Estrada, Partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, LLP; and Mr. Redmond James Hogan, President, Latin America and Caribbean Resources, LLP. The delegation arrived slightly early, and as a consequence, there was hardly anyone from GOH to greet them. As the delegation was coming down the stairs, however, Juan Lara Bueso, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Ambassador Ricardo Flores, Chief of Protocol, showed up. Hands shaken, the delegation was swept away to their hotel. The delegation later attended a brief but somewhat disorganized presentation of credentials ceremony at the Presidential Palace with then-President Ricardo Maduro and then-Foreign Minister Mario Fortin. The ceremony, which included all foreign delegations to the inauguration, was short and the delegation then returned to the hotel.

13. (SBU) The delegation was split into three groups for the evening receptions on January 26. The Attorney General and his wife went to the formal dinner for Heads of State, hosted by then-President Ricardo Maduro. They were the first to arrive for the 8:00 PM dinner and the Director of the museum, Juan Manuel Pose, gave the Attorney General a private tour

while they waited for the other guests and host. President Maduro and his wife arrived at 8:30 PM. After greeting their guests, all were seated for dinner. The Attorney General and his wife were seated at a table with the three outgoing Honduran Vice Presidents and their spouses: Armida Villeda de Lopez, Alberto Diaz Lobo, and Vicente Williams. The Japanese Head of Delegation, Parliamentarian Junio Hatoyama, and Taiwanese President of Congress Wang Jin-Pyng, were also at the AG's table. President Antonio Saca of El Salvador, President Abel Pacheco of Costa Rica, President Oscar Berger of Guatemala, President Enrique Bolanos of Nicaragua, Prime Minister Driss Jettou of Morocco, and Prince Felipe de Asturias of Spain were seated at the other table with President and Mrs. Maduro.

14. (SBU) The Attorney General had a private pull-aside meeting with President Bolanos after dinner.

15. (SBU) Meanwhile, the DCM hosted a reception for the rest of the USG delegation at the Ambassador's residence. Guests included former Ambassador to Honduras and Inter-American Foundation President Larry Palmer, new members of the Zelaya Administration, and business and civil society representatives. The Ambassador joined the delegation at 8:30 PM after he left a cocktail reception hosted by President Maduro for Heads of Delegations (minus the Heads of State and the U.S., Japanese, and Taiwanese delegation heads).

#### Change of Power - Mission Accomplished with a Few Glitches

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16. (SBU) The USG delegation arrived punctually at the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) the morning of January 27. BCIE was to be used as a staging area for the

various delegations, as well as an opportunity for them to mingle over coffee and pastries. It quickly became quite obvious that on one was truly in charge of the operation, which was supposed to ensure the smooth flow of delegations to the stadium in reverse protocol order, but in reality led to almost a 1 1/2 hour delay. Upon arrival at the stadium, the delegation was again lined up and made to wait for well over twenty minutes before entering the stadium. Protocol order was not maintained, as evidenced by the fact that multiple delegations entered after instead of before Heads of State (several Latin American delegations were quite upset by the GOH's protocol snafus). While the U.S. delegation held at the entrance to the stadium, PolOffs battled to keep the delegation's assigned seats, but in the end were successful.

17. (SBU) The AG and the U.S. delegation were very warmly received by the packed stadium as they walked around the track to the stage and took their seats. Once all the delegations were finally seated, the ceremony itself began nearly two hours later than planned due to the lack of organization surrounding the flow into the stadium. Zelaya's inaugural address covered a range of topics, with local press highlighting his emphasis on anti-corruption and plans to improve government services. Zelaya departed from his prepared text numerous times. During the ceremony Zelaya also signed the law approved by the new Congress: a citizen power law.

#### Bilat and Quick Lunch

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18. (SBU) President Zelaya moved his previously scheduled bilat with the U.S. delegation from the day before the inauguration to directly after his swearing-in in a formal gesture to the United States of the USG's importance to the new GOH. The bilat itself was brief (septel) as the inauguration had run long and pushed back the start of a lunch for delegation heads at the Presidential Palace. The Attorney General and his wife were able to attend part of the delayed lunch before leaving for the airport. Hosting their table was Vice President Elvin Santos and his wife, with other foreign delegation heads also at the table.

All's Well That End's Well

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¶9. (SBU) Comment: Given the GOH's disorganization at the inauguration, Post is happy that the events went as smoothly as they did. All in all, this was a positive start to a new government whose stated aim is to improve how the GOH delivers government services and safeguards the public trust. With all the hoopla now over, the challenge will be for the Zelaya team to transfer their lofty rhetoric into meaningful changes in how the GOH does business. End Comment.

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